

Resume Writing Tips and Instructions

- **Resumes do not get jobs they get interviews.**
- **Resumes alert potential employers that you are seeking a position in their organization.**
- **Resumes should convey your unique skills and abilities as they relate to the position for which you are applying.**
- **Resumes should not include every detail about you; rather they should highlight the specifics that make you a qualified candidate for the position you seek.**
- **Human resource professionals know that the best predictor of future performance is past performance; in your resume, highlight the results of your work activities.**

Step One: Brainstorm, compile and organize

Before beginning your resume, put together an **ACCOMPLISHMENTS HISTORY**, including your most significant achievements from work, hobbies, volunteer projects, school, extracurricular activities, travel, and other life experiences.

Gather documents related to your experiences, e.g. performance reviews, letters of appreciation, job descriptions, documents or presentations you wrote or prepared, etc. This can be helpful now with your brainstorming, and later to review, check and confirm details. Categories to spark ideas and organize your information include:

- Personal achievements (e.g., financing your education, overcoming obstacles)
- Education (e.g., classes related to your career goal, certifications, special training)
- Activities and Honors (e.g., student organizations, professional associations, scholarships, academic achievements, sororities or fraternities)
- Volunteer Experience (e.g., church, civic groups, tutoring)
- Work Experience (e.g., paid/unpaid, part/full-time, internships, military)
- Important Career Related Skills (e.g., computer proficiency, foreign languages, problem solving, critical thinking, communication abilities)
- Hobbies and Interests (e.g., planning trips, managing personal investments)

Add to this Accomplishments History file and maintain it over time because if trends continue, this will not be the last time you write a resume. Once you've compiled and organized information in your Accomplishments History it will be invaluable to you for all resumes you write throughout your career.

Step two: Identify the information you will use.

First *identify the employer's needs*, then identify the information you will use to best market yourself for the position. Grade, select, and reject your information until you have identified what you feel most positively **represents your background relevant to the requirements of the position.**

Applicability, brevity and clarity are crucial. Create the impression that while the paper document is good, the best is yet to come... in an interview! Do not worry if

your resume does not tell everything about you. Find balance between thoroughness and too much information.

Step three: Write It!

There are many different ways to write a resume and lots of different opinions about what is good. The most important opinion is yours, so be sure to create a resume that reflects who you are.

- Create self-awareness of your qualifications and the best way to present them for employers. Having these facts in mind creates self-assurance and builds confidence for the interview.
- Provide the opportunity to recognize some of your weaknesses. Of course, you will not include these in the resume; however, once identified you can make plans for growth.

Pass the 5 to 15 second glance test! Know that employers see hundreds of resumes and that they skim first. If this first test is passed, they might look at your resume more thoroughly. When ordering information and sections in your resume, prioritize according to the needs of the employer, putting the most important information toward the top and to the left.

Choose headings and organize them to best present your information. There is no perfect way to organize a resume but *all resumes should contain **Identity and contact information**, information about **education** and a section of **employment related experience***. Don't be afraid of grouping headings (e.g. "Education and Honors").

Customize the resume for each position you desire. The days of creating one resume and duplicating it 50 times are over. Employers expect applicants to customize his/her resume for each position. You should expect to have multiple versions of your resume with structure and content supporting the employment objective.

Step 4: Proofread, proofread, proofread!

Be prepared to write, edit and rewrite your resume.

Many personnel directors see the resume as a reflection of the applicant. Spelling errors, poor grammar, poor organization, smudges, wordiness, vagueness, etc., will produce negative impressions. Employers may think, "Is the applicant careless, sloppy or unprofessional?" Eliminate errors: spelling, punctuation and typing. Erasures and correction fluid will screen you out from being considered for an interview.

For the finished resume use quality paper (at least 20% cotton bond); white, ivory, or possibly a very pale gray or light blue in color; avoid patterns that copy and give a "dirty" appearance.

Source: Kansas University Career Center website